Arizona College Application Campaign (AzCAC) Pilot Summary and Lessons Learned for 2014

The goal of the Arizona College Application Campaign is that every high school senior completes at least one application.

- Generates community and family support
- Provides structure and ensures deadlines are met
- Web-based resources provided for site coordinators
- Stimulates school-wide enthusiasm

Creating a cohort inclusive of first-in-family, low income students with school-wide, family, peer, and community support to apply

100% of site coordinators said AzCAC was a valuable experience for students, AzCAC provided energy and motivation for all students to complete a college application, and they will participate next year.

Lessons Learned from the Pilot Campaign

- Data from Exit Survey was invaluable; will strongly focus on 100% completion next year.
- Data provided through the CAC survey allowed non-completers to be targeted.
- Data from Exit Survey is a good base point for gathering yearly info.
- Class assignments to develop personal statements and complete the CAC checklist were very productive.
- Teacher participation is invaluable for success.
- IT staff support at the high school was critical to planning and also during the event.
- Banners, posters, and wristbands were extremely valuable in creating buzz and in building the college-going culture.
- Students were unaware of what comprises a complete application.
- Students were confused regarding the difference between an application and an application fee waiver form.
- The web-based College Application Checklist resource provided was effective.

Challenges

- Scheduling event around class and computer lab availability.
- Notifying students and parents in advance.
- 45-60 minute class periods did not provide adequate time for one application.
- Getting students prepared to complete a college application.
- Troubleshooting technology or internet issues during the event.
- Navigating various postsecondary institutions' online application processes.
- Filing of Common Application this year was a problem.

Site Coordinator Recommendations

- Share data with administration, teachers, and counseling team and celebrate.
- Data provided the ability to do targeted programming for various groups (e.g. military, apprenticeships, college-bound, etc.).
- Front load more information regarding college applications and the process.
- Plan a follow-up day for absent or non-completing students.
- Pre-load in-state college and university applications and the Exit Survey on the computers. Test/check to ensure links and Exit Survey transmission works.
- Have the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) Waiver Form pre-completed and available to students, then following-up to ensure that they were sent and received.
- Obtain MEID as a pre-step for application to Maricopa Community Colleges. It took 15-40 minutes to receive the ID.
- Prepare a handout with instructions/steps for the day that students can follow.
- Provide a roster of students to serve as a basis for the list of who attended the event.
- Provide a list of transcript requests to the school records manager; follow-up to ensure that the transcripts were sent and received.
- Require students to show evidence of Exit Survey completion prior to receipt of any giveaways (wristbands, coupons, etc.).
- Schedule the last 10 minutes for completion of the Exit Survey.
- Provide unofficial student transcripts to students on event day. Includes SAIS ID and courses completed necessary for applications.
- Schedule during block days to provide more time for application completion.
- Hold volunteer training on a day before, not the day of the event.
- Schedule 1 ½ - 2 hours to complete an application.
- Have more computers available to students; take computers to classrooms.
- Make it a 2-day event.

Recommendations to the Commission

- Work with ADE and ABOR to provide NSC data to high schools at aggregate and individual levels for certificates, college participation and college completion.
- Work to ensure that all community college admission portals are available in November for the upcoming fall semester.
- Work with Maricopa Community Colleges to shorten the wait time to receive an MEID. ID's took too long, 15-40 minutes, to receive.
- Request that universities/colleges waive application fees and remove SAIS ID as required.
- Work with community colleges toward a welcome/acceptance communication for all who apply/enroll so that students can celebrate "acceptance" with classmates.
- Connect high school counselors to private technical/career institutions without pressure for recruitment.
- Raise issue of $300+ enrollment fee required in May by three public universities and its effects on low-income students.
- Request the name of the student's counselor on the Exit Survey.